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OTHER AGENCIES

The progress made in recent years in the fields of medicine and surgery has been no less striking than in that of humanitarianism; while the development of a new social consciousness (a concomitant, of course, of the humanitarian movement) has resulted in throwing about the soldier who wars for America in 1918 a set of safeguards, and in providing him with a degree of comfort such as no other warriors in the history of the world ever enjoyed. Against drunkenness and vice, twin plagues of army life since the beginning of the world, he is at least as well protected as is the civilian at home. Libraries and clubhouses and games and lectures are provided with unstinted generosity for his recreation and instruction. That his mind may be free from incidental worry, a system of life insurance on a scale hitherto undreamed of has been evolved; while the wife or other dependents at home are insured by the largess of a parental government against coming to actual want during his absence.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

All these things will avail little to comfort the soldier or his loved ones if it is in fact true that he is being sent to a certain and awful death—if his span of life, after reaching France, is limited to a few weeks, and after reaching the front line trenches to a few hours or minutes. Let us proceed, then, to weigh this particular fish. We can do it only approximately, for it is inherent in the nature of warfare that accurate, dependable statistics are commonly lacking, or extremely difficult to obtain. The testimony of such as we have, however, is all in support of the view that never before in civilized warfare has the individual soldier had so good a prospect of surviving the term of his enlistment and returning once more to the homeland as now. It is not contended, of course, that modern war is simply a pleasant pastime from which all will return unscathed, but merely that the current impression concerning its having become